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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this brief guide is to assist managers in the process of selecting personnel to fill training vacancies. It describes key steps in the selection process and provides a means for accomplishing these steps in a systematic fashion; however it is not intended to make selection decisions or to supersede personnel regulations. Three major sections are included: Reviewing Job Requirements and Establishing Selection Criteria, Formulating Behavioral Indicators, and Selecting Interview Techniques. The appendices contain examples of a job requirements list, a completed Selection Process Worksheet, and a blank worksheet which may be photocopied. (HD).

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Manager's Guide To Selecting Training Employees

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to assist managers in the process of selecting personnel to fill Training vacancies. It describes key steps in the selection process and provides a means for accomplishing these steps in a systematic fashion. It is not intended to make selection decisions or to supersede Personnel regulations.

Importance of the Selection Decision

Many Training positions are critically situated. The performance of the individual selected to fill these positions will shape the overall quality of an organization's training efforts for a significant period of time. Therefore, the importance of investing time and energy into the selection process cannot be overemphasized.

Diversity of Training Positions and Selection Criteria

Positions in the Service's Training function vary significantly. They range in grade from GS-5 to GS-13. They are located in the National Office, regional offices, district offices, and service centers.

Also, the program responsibilities of the positions vary in their nature and scope. Because of this diversity, standard selection criteria (the requirements needed to perform as a "superior Training employee") have not been established. It is the responsibility of selecting officials to establish selection criteria for specific Training vacancies.

Minimum Education and Experience Requirements

Civil Service Commission Handbook X 118 requires candidates for entry into Training positions to meet <u>one</u> of the following education and experience requirements:

1. A 4-year course in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's degree;

OR

2. Three years of experience in work which provides evidence that the candidate has:

   a. A good general understanding of the systems, methods, and administrative machinery for accomplishing the work of an organization;

   b. The ability to analyze problems and apply sound judgment in assessing the practical implications of alternative solutions;

   c. The ability to communicate with others effectively, both orally and in writing; and

   d. The capacity to employ these knowledges and abilities in resolving the problems presented by the assignment.

Such experience may have been acquired in any type of work except: trades and crafts, clerical work, or military personnel work which did not include responsiblity for any civilian employees.

OR

3. An equivalent combination of education and experience as defined in 1 or 2 above. In combining education with experience an academic year of study which comprises 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours will be considered equivalent to nine months of experience.

Selection Criteria, Behavioral Indicators, and Interview Techniques

From the candidates who meet the minimum education and experience requirements, a single selection must be made. The candidate selected should be the one most likely to perform as a superior Training employee in the vacant position. To move systematically toward this final decision, selecting officals must take three key enabling actions. They are:

1. Establishing selection criteria,

2. Formulating specific behavioral indicators for each criteria, and

3. Selecting interview techniques for obtaining the information needed to measure the candidates against each criteria. This is in addition to the information (evaluations, awards, training) obtained before the interview.

Design of the Guide

This guide provides instructions and a worksheet to assist in systematically planning these three enabling actions. The main body of the guide has three sections:

Section II - Reviewing Job Requirements and Establishing Selection Criteria

Section III - Formulating Behavioral Indicators

Section IV - Selecting Interview Techniques

The appendices contain examples of a job requirements list and a completed Selection Process Worksheet and a blank worksheet which you may photocopy for your own use.

Improving the Guide

Users of the guide should submit suggestions for improvements to:

Director, Training Division A:T:S
1111 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20224

II. REVIEWING OF JOB REQUIREMENTS AND ESTABLISHING SELECTION CRITERIA

Importance of Selection Criteria

The Servicewide Promotion Plan requires that selection criteria be established by the selection official (in conjunction with Personnel) before beginning a promotion action. The criteria cannot be changed during the course of the action. This step is therefore very important. It begins with a review of the job requirements of the vacant position.

Reviewing Job Requirements

The purpose of this review is to identify those job requirements of the vacant position which, if possessed by an incumbent, would describe a "superior Training employee." Job requirements include such categories as:

1. Knowledge (such as the knowledge of training methodologies);
2. Skills (such as the skill in developing performance measures);
3. Abilities (such as the ability to coordinate programs);
4. Personal characteristics (such as the characteristic of independence).

A number of documents are available to assist in this review:

1. Position descriptions
2. Qualification standards
3. Training Program Guides (IRM Exhibit 0410-8)
4. Organization and functions of (as applicable):
   a. Regional Training and Development Branch (IRM 1114.44)
   b. District Training Branch (IRM 1118.73)
   c. Service Center Training Branch (IRM 1117.263)
   d. National Office Training Division and Branches (IRM 1113.44)

List of Job Requirements That Describe a Superior Employee

The product of your review should be a list of those job requirements that describe a superior employee in the vacant position. This is the base data upon which the selection criteria are developed. You may find it helpful to arrange the job requirements into broad categories, for example,

1. General Abilities--abilities generally considered basic to all Training positions, for example, the ability to work indepenently.

2. Training or Learning Specialist Abilities--abilities directly related to training or learning process, for example, the the ability to instruct.

3. Program Management, Administration, and Consultation Abilities--abilities related to the nature and scope of the program responsibilities of the position and the nature of work relationships, for example, management of course development activities.

Assessing the Criticality of the Job Requirements to the Selection Process

When you are satisfied that you have listed the job requirements that describe a superior employee, you must decide which of those listed will be critical in the selection process. In making this decision, you might ask the following questions about each job requirement:

1. Is it reasonable to expect candidates to possess this ability considering the grade level of the vacant position?

2. Is the ability so elementary that it is highly probable that all candidates will possess it or can easily acquire it once selected?

3. Is it highly probable that the best candidate will still be selected if this ability is ignored in the selection process?

Writing the Selection Criteria

If you've done a good job in identifying the job requirements that describe a superior employee and assessed each for its criticality to the selection process, most of the work of writing selection criteria is done. As a general rule you should write 5 to 10 criteria. Less than 5 often proves to be too few to adequately differentiate among candidates. More than 10 can become impractical. (See Appendix A.)

Selection Process Worksheet

Once you've made a firm decision, enter the criteria in column 1 of the Selection Process Worksheet. The worksheet is designed to assist in planning for and recording information collected in the subsequent steps in the selection process. (See Appendix B.)

Relative Weights for Each Criterion

In deciding on your selection criteria you may feel that each deserves equal weight or that some are more important than others. If the latter is the case you must establish the relative weights for each. The relative weights are entered in column 7 of the worksheet. (See Appendix B.)

III. FORMULATING BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

Definition and Purpose of Behavioral Indicators

Selection criteria can be written at various levels of generality. To guide panel members in assessing the candidates during the screening process and in the selection interview, behavior indicators should be written for each selection criterion. Behavioral indicators are statements of specific, observable behaviors that candidates who meet a selection criterion are likely to exhibit.

Aids in Formulating Behavioral Indicators

The documents used in determining the job requirements of the vacant position will be useful for generating behavioral indicators. A behavioral indicator should be stated in action terms, that is, contain an action verb. The following Table of Action Verbs can be helpful in selecting approprate action verbs. For example, using the criterion, "the ability to conduct classroom training activities," the application category seems to be most appropriate. In reviewing the action verbs in that category, the last one, "uses" rings a bell. "Uses various instructional methods" or "uses various training aids" might be the behavioral indicators that best express the intent of the selection criteria. On the other hand the use of one particular method might be crucial: the ability "to use the directed discussion method."

It is important to remember that standard selection criteria and behavioral statements do not exist for Training vacancies. As with selection criteria, behavioral indicators should reflect the job requirements of the vacant Training position which if possessed by a incumbent would describe a superior Training employee. This is the general rule that should guide your thinking.

Number of Behavioral Indicators

There is no hard and fast rule for deciding how many specific behavioral indicators should be listed for each criterion. One may be enough in cases where simple, relatively clearcut, knowledge or abilities are involved. A criterion that involves a complex ability or a mix of various knowledge and abilities may require four or more.

From Behavioral Indicators to Interview Techniques

Once the behavioral indicators are formulated they should be recorded in column 2 of the Selection Process Worksheet.

The next step in the selection process involves extracting relevant information from the candidates' applications and documents supporting the applications. (Enter in column 3.) In most cases this information will not be sufficient and interviews will be arranged. Before the interview, columns 1, 2, and 3 of the Selection Process Worksheet should be reviewed to identify what you still need to know in order to assess whether and how well the candidate measures up against each criteria. (Enter in column 4.) Obtaining this information becomes the objective of the interview. The nature of the information becomes the basis for selecting interview techniques.

TABLE OF ACTION VERBS

Ability Level or Dimension	Some Illustrative Behavioral Verbs
Knowledge	defines, describes, identifies, lists, outlines
Comprehension	converts, defines, distinguishes, estimates, explains, extends, infers, predicts
Application	changes, computes, demonstrates, manipulates, modifies, operates, predicts, relates, uses
Analysis	breaks down, diagrams, differentiates, separates
Synthesis	categorizes, combines, compiles, creates, designs, generates, modifies, organizes, plans, reorganizes
Evaluation	appraises, compares, concludes, contrasts, criticizes, describes, discriminates, justifies, interprets, supports

IV. SELECTING INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

Purpose of Interview Techniques

The techniques used in the interview should give the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate (and the panel members additional data to assess) whether and how well he/she met the selection criteria. The techniques are dictated by the selection criteria and their behavioral indicators.

Example

Let's assume you are dealing with the following selection criterion and behavioral indicator:

Selection Criterion: The ability to conduct classroom training activities.

Behavioral Indicator: Uses the directed discussion method.

In this case, the best interview techniques would be one that requires the candidate to lead a directed discussion. This might be accomplished through a group exercise.

Let's assume further that you wished to assess the same candidate on a second criterion:

Selection Criterion: Basic knowledge of the systems approach to training.

Behavioral Indicators: Lists key phases of the systems approach. Defines key components of systems approach.

The candidate could be assessed on this criterion through direct questions. Another approach would be to make the systems approach the subject of the directed discussion in the group exercise. Thus the candidate could be assessed on two criteria using a single interview technique.

Interview Techniques and Test Instruments

The logic behind selecting interview techniques is very similar to that used in writing test instruments. By specifying in behavioral terms the responses you wish to assess, it becomes easier to select appropriate interview techniques. Also, as with writing test instruments, your choice of interview techniques will be affected by time, resources, and administrative constraints.

Table of Interview Techniques

The Table of Interview Techniques can be used to assist in selecting appropriate interview techniques. First review the information you've already entered on the Selection Process Worksheet, particularly the entries in column 4, Data Needed from Interview. For each entry in column 4, using the table as a guide, select an appropriate interview technique, and enter it in column 5.

Note that the Table of Interview Techniques builds upon the Table of Action Verbs. The techniques listed are suggestive. Do not hesitate to develop your own techniques or select others not covered in the table.

Simple to Complex Techniques

As you move down the table, the interview techniques tend to become more complex. As a general rule, more complex techniques take more time to design, plan, coordinate, and execute. The investment of this time pays off in the amount and quality of information you are able to obtain about the candidates.

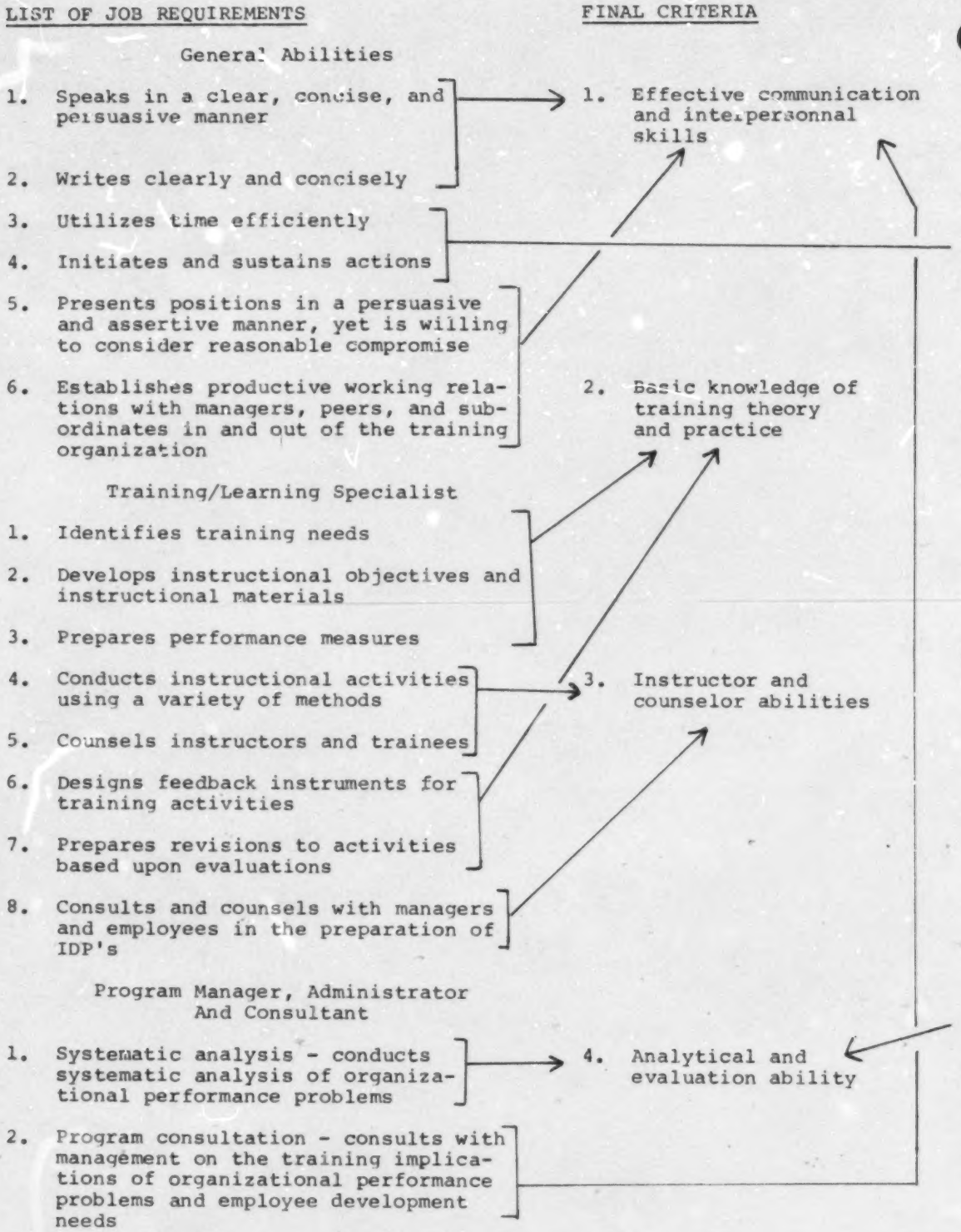
Overall Interview Strategy

An overall strategy should be developed using the lists of techniques recorded in column 5. This involves combining and sequencing the techniques. The final preparation of the interview involves formulating questions, exercises, and procedures required to execute the strategy. These should be coordinated with all members of the panel before the interview. A record of the observations made during the interview should be entered in column 6 of the Selection Process Worksheet, and ratings entered in column 8.

TABLE OF INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

ABILITY LEVEL OR DIMENSION	SOME ILLUSTRATIVE ACTION VERBS	INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES
KNOWLEDGE	- defines (e.g., concepts)	- direct questions (What is meant by...?)
	- describes (e.g., procedures)	- direct questions (How does this work?)
	- lists (e.g., components)	- direct questions (What are the key elements of...?)
COMPREHENSION	- explains (e.g., relationships)	- direct questions (How is X related to Y?)
	- distinguishes (e.g., concepts)	- direct questions (What is difference between X and Y?)
APPLICATION	- applies (e.g., effective interpersonal relations)	- role play (among candidates)
	- acts (e.g., independently)	- practical exercise (Given these choices, what would you do?)
	- acts (e.g., decisively)	- in-basket exercise (including emergency situations)
	- applies (e.g., learning principles	- problem exercise (Given this training need, which training methods would you select?)
ANALYSIS	- identifies (e.g., causes)	- practical exercise (What factors are the likely causes of this problem?)
	- differentiate (e.g., the critical from the noncritical)	- practical exercise (Given these causes of this problem, which do you think are most critical? Why?)
	- selects (e.g., best candidate)	- projective questions (Given this problem, which of these employees would you assign?)
SYNTHESIS	- organizes (e g., a section)	- practical exercise (Given these projects and personnel, how would you organize and assign the work?)
	- designs (e.g., training programs)	- practical exercise (Given these objectives and constraints, how would you design this program?)
	- plans (e.g., procedural change)	- practical exercise (How do you plan the implementation of this change?)
EVALUATION	- appraises (e.g., performance)	- simulation (What would be your critique of these presentations?)
	- compares (e.g., methods)	- projective questions (Compare these two approaches to the problem.)
	- evaluates (e.g., training program	- practical exercise (Given this feedback, what recommendations would you make?)

APPENDIX A - EXAMPLE OF A JOB REQUIREMENTS LIST

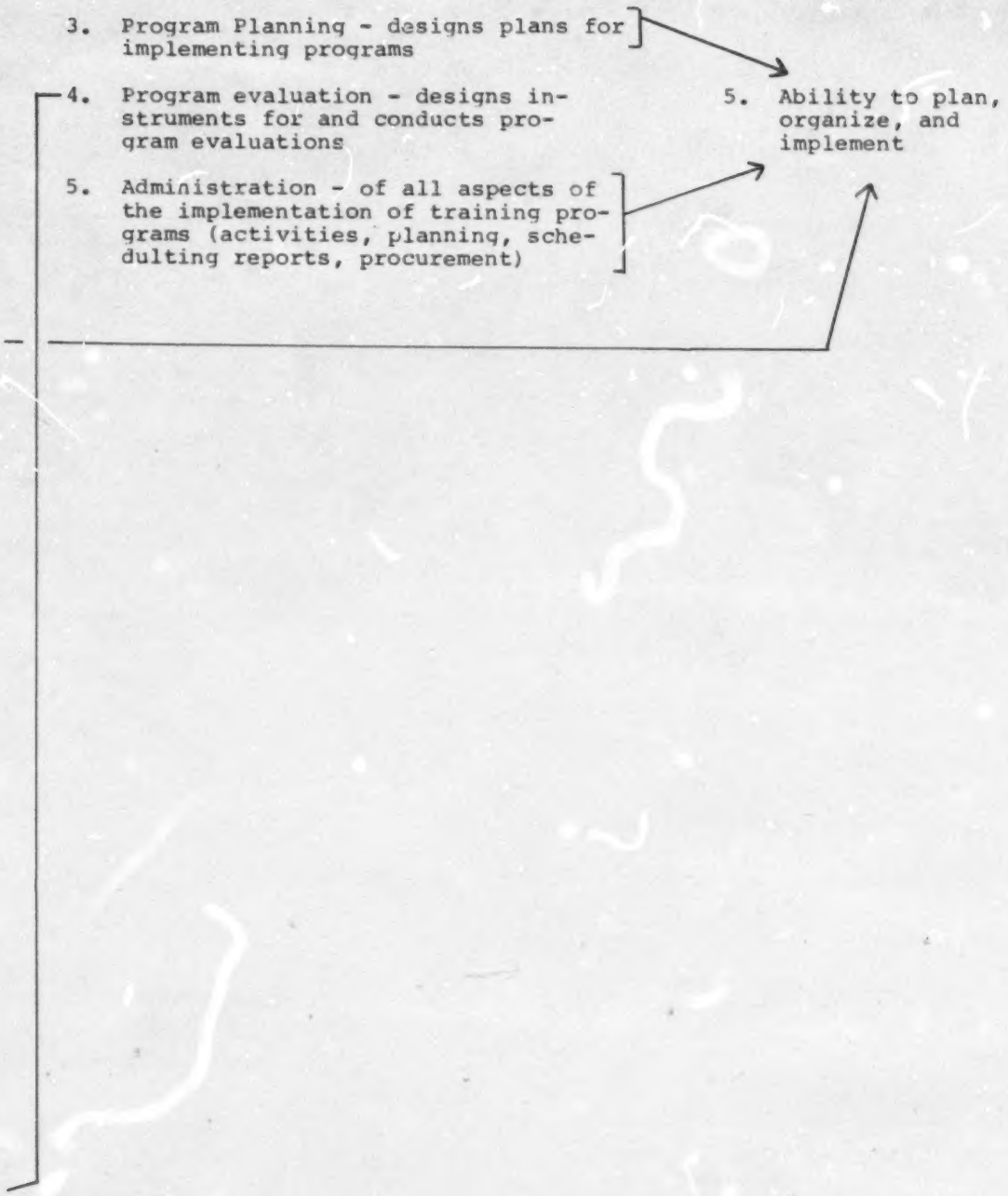

LIST OF JOB REQUIREMENTS
FINAL CRITERIA
General Abilities
1. Speaks in a clear, concise, and persuasive manner
2. Writes clearly and concisely
1. Effective communication and interpersonnal skills
3. Utilizes time efficiently
4. Initiates and sustains actions
5. Presents positions in a persuasive and assertive manner, yet is willing to consider reasonable compromise
6. Establishes productive working relations with managers, peers, and subordinates in and out of the training organization
2. Basic knowledge of training theory and practice
Training/Learning Specialist
1. Identifies training needs
2. Develops instructional objectives and instructional materials
3. Prepares performance measures
4. Conducts instructional activities using a variety of methods
5. Counsels instructors and trainees
3. Instructor and counselor abilities
6. Designs feedback instruments for training activities
7. Prepares revisions to activities based upon evaluations
8. Consults and counsels with managers and employees in the preparation of IDP's
Program Manager, Administrator And Consultant
1. Systematic analysis - conducts systematic analysis of organizational performance problems
4. Analytical and evaluation ability
2. Program consultation - consults with management on the training implications of organizational performance problems and employee development needs

3. Program Planning - designs plans for implementing programs

4. Program evaluation - designs instruments for and conducts program evaluations

5. Administration - of all aspects of the implementation of training programs (activities, planning, scheduling reports, procurement)

5. Ability to plan, organize, and implement



Appendix B (page 1)

SELECTION PROCESS WORKSHEET

1 SELECTION CRITERIA	2 BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS	3 RELEVANT DATA OBTAINED BEFORE INTERVIEW (evaluations, awards, training)
1. Effective Communication & Interpersonal Skills	1. Demonstrates ability to write clearly, concisely, persuasively	- 3 awards for writing in college
	2. Demonstrates ability to speak in clear, concise manner	-
	3. Demonstrates ability to meet and deal with various type employees	- two past employers felt this his strongest ability.
2. Basic Knowledge of Training Theory and Practice	1. Describes key elements of training system/process	- taken 18 credits in Education
	2. Describes key principles of learning/training	- " " " " "
3. Instructor and Counselor Abilities	1. Presents instruction effectively (using lecture, discussion)	- was instructor in military
	2. Explains basic principles of counseling trainees	-
4. Analytical and Evaluation Ability	1. Identifies causes of problems in systematic manner	-
	2. Evaluates performance against a given standard and recommends corrective action	-
5. Ability to Plan, Organize and Implement	1. Plans and organizes work in systematic fashion	- held 3 administrative jobs; general evaluations good.
	2. Acts assertively and decisively	-
6.		
7.		

CANDIDATE'S NAME JOHN MAPLE

4 DATA NEEDED FROM INTERVIEW	5 INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES AND QUESTIONS	6 DATA FROM INTERVIEW	7 REL. WT.	8 RATING
- Confirm - observe speech - Confirm	- review writing in exercises - observe throughout interview - observe in practical exercises and discussions; ask direct question	- unusually clear - polished speaker - relaxed with everyone in interview - excellent	20	20
- Is knowledge transferable to training? - "	- direct questions - training processes? - direct questions	Doesn't have well formed positions, but has "basic" academic knowledge	20	13
- Confirm, especially discussion ability - probe on Counseling	- have him lead discussion - direct questions; projective questions	- lively, well-controlled, pointed discussion - vague responses on counseling, but articulate	20	15
- How does he approach problem to get at causes? - What approach would he take to evaluation in training setting?	- Practical exercise - Practical exercise and projective questions	- took shotgun approach - again a shotgun approach	20	10
- Confirm - Observe in exercises	- in-basket exercise - in-basket exercise; practical exercise	- took reasonable actions in all cases - attacked exercises; confident in presentations	20	19

Appendix C (page 1)

SELECTION PROCESS WORKSHEET

1 SELECTION CRITERIA	2 BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS	3 RELEVANT DATA OBTAINED BEFORE INTERVIEW (evaluations, awards, training)

CANDIDATE'S NAME _____

4 DATA NEEDED FROM INTERVIEW	5 INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES AND QUESTIONS	6 DATA FROM INTERVIEW	7 REL. WT.	8 RATING

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